OF UNDERWALD,

ONE OF THE

CATHOLIC CANTONS IN SWISSERLAND.

BY A NATIVE OF *ARAW* ITS CAPITAL,

WHO WAS

AN EYE WITNESS.

Credita res, capiuque fides!

———Quis talia fando

Temperet a lachrymis?

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

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PREFACE:

OF THE

ENGLISH TRANSLATOR AND EDITOR.

THERE are few perſons in this kingdom unacquainted with the ſtate of Swiſſerland, as it exiſted before the invaſion of the French. The mildneſs of its governments, the induſtry and virtue of its people, and the general appearance of proſperity, and content throughout all the Cantons, were ſuch as recalled to an Engliſhman at every ſtep the images of his own happy country. Into the hearts of Jacobins alone it could enter, to diſturp this peaceful and ſmiling ſcene: But to them it was a ſacred duty. The happineſs of Swiſſerland like that of England was a contradiction to all their theories; a living monument of the bleſſings of regular and well-ordered government, a contraſt to the miſeries of France more perſuaſive than a thouſand arguments.

From the very firſt moment, therefore, of the French revolution, its emiſſaries were diligently

employed in that tranquil and unoffending country, to ſow thoſe ſeeds, which have produced there, as they muſt in every other ſoil, the full harveſt of human miſery.

In the meaſures taken by theſe mild and paternal governments, to check the progreſs of this evil, too much weakneſs certainly appeared.—A ſubmiſſion equally undignified and impolitic was manifeſted in all their conduct towards France; from whom they experienced a long ſeries of inſult, and injury, and a continued courſe of hardly-diſguiſed hoſtility. The error was however venial. It proceeded from the habits of long tranquillity, from the earneſt deſire of maintaining peace, and even from ſome remaining attachment to the intereſt of ſo old an ally as France. The puniſhment has been dreadful beyond example.

Few details have yet been publiſhed in England, of thoſe horrid ravages by which the moſt flouriſhing country in Europe was laid waſte, immediately after the French troops had ſucceeded in forcing their paſſage into Berne. A ſucceſs much leſs due to the ſuperiority of their numbers, than to the artifices which they employed on this, as on every other occaſion, by holding out freſh negotiations of peace, at the very moment of their unprovoked hoſtility, by the perfidious breach of that very armiſtice, to which alone they had owed the ſafety of their

army, and by the opinion, which in the interval they had contrived to diſſeminate among the Swiſs troops, that they were betrayed by their own officers.

Still, however, after the conqueſt of Berne and the deſolation of the Swiſs vallies, much remained to be done. The mountain Cantons, thoſe in which the liberty of Swiſſerland had originated, was yet ſubdued. The French troops marched againſt them, but were repulſed with loſs.—What force could not do, they reſorted to their uſual policy to accompliſh. A treaty was concluded, by which it was ſolemnly ſtipulated that thoſe Cantons ſhould retain the ſecure, and unmoleſted enjoyment of their Religion, Government, and Laws.

This treaty has been obſerved preciſely as all the others into which the French Republic has entered. The ſubjection of the other parts of Swiſſerland were firſt completed. A ſet of men was then found wicked and baſe enough, to take upon themſelves in ſuch circumſtances, the functions of a Swiss Directory, and to theſe men, was at length committed the taſk of ſummoning to ſlavery the deſcendants of thoſe who founded the liberty of Swiſſerland, and of demanding that the miniſters of the Religion of their fathers ſhould be delivered up to ſuffer death. The demand was reſiſted with horror;

the French army marched to enforce it, and the refult is told in the following pages, by one of the brave and unhappy men, who then fought for the laft remnant of liberty in Swifferland.

It cannot be neceffary to apply this hiftory to the feelings of this country. It is to be hoped that every Englifhman who reads it, while he execrates the oppreffors, and makes the caufe of the victims his own, will remember that if there is now a Swiss Directory at Araw, there has recently exifted (and though once deftroyed there again exifts) an Irish Directory at Dublin, and that there are ftill amongft us men who are labouring to eftablifh an English Directory in London.

THE

FALL OF UNDERWALD,

&c.

DEEPLY afflicted by the misfortunes of my wretched country, in the midst of the conflagrations of our houses, and the groans of my expiring brethren, I am ill able to undertake a description of all the horrid scenes which I have witnessed in the Canton of Underwald, since the third of September. You knew that a capitulation had been made at Einsidlen, between some of the smaller Cantons, and the French General Schauemburg, which appeared to secure to us the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace, and of our ancient rights. In this hope we trusted, when suddenly we learnt that notwithstanding

this agreement, the Swiſs Directory at Araw, acting under the immediate influence of France, inſiſted upon our taking the oath which they had impoſed on the reſt of the Cantons. On receiving this demand, which was accompanied by threats, and ſupported by the terror of the French arms, the two little Cantons of Switz and Underwald, ſent Deputies firſt to Lucerne, and ſoon after to Araw. They were received at this place with every mark of indignity and inſult. In vain they appealed to the expreſs ſtipulations of the capitulation at Einſidlen. In vain they entreated the pretended government of Swiſſerland not to violate a treaty reſting on public faith, the obligations of which are reſpected even by the moſt barbarous nations. This was their anſwer, "You, as well as the "other Cantons, muſt take the oath, and you "muſt further give up to us, alive or dead, nine "of your principal leaders, and among them, "three of your prieſts. Many hundreds more "ſhall ſhare the ſame fate. The conſequences

" of your obstinancy, shall be held out an ex-
" ample to the world."

With this insolent and menacing answer, our Deputies returned to their country. An Assembly was called without delay, who first proceeded to an unanimous resolution, to place guards in all the most important posts and avenues of the town, to prevent surprise. The message of the Directory at Araw was then publicly read to the Assembly, and the danger with which the country was menaced laid before them. Threats like these, from their former brethren, (now exercising an usurped authority over their own countrymen, under the controul of a cruel and perfidious enemy,) were received with the utmost horror and indignation, and far from bending their neck tamely to the yoke, the inhabitants of Underwald at once unanimously agreed rather to be buried in the ruins of their country, than to give up one of their fellow citizens in so dishonourable and base a manner. Every one took up

arms, and prepared to execute this heroic reſolution.

On the* third of September 1798, hoſtilities began between our people and the French, who with the greateſt part of their forces, prepared to march up againſt Underwald. The French with three armed veſſels advanced on the lake of Wallenſtad, they ſeized the poſt of Kirchſitte, but were driven back with great loſs, by a ſmall number of our troops. On the fourth they advanced with five armed veſſels, and on the fifth with ſeven to the ſame poſt, but were repulſed in both attacks with the loſs of many men, and of two veſſels which ran a ground. On our ſide not one man was killed. On the ſeventh the ſame was repeated, at the ſame time ſome of them ſkirmiſhed near Altnach, and Kernwald. On the ninth there was a pitched battle, which laſted from five in the morning till night. This battle decided our

* The very ſame third of September on which ſix years before the maſſacres of the 10th of Auguſt were renewed in cold blood, and the remains of the Swiſs troops at Paris, butchered even in the priſons.

fate, and it may be reckoned, even according to the teſtimony of the French, one of the moſt ſevere which has been fought in our time. The enemy advanced towards us with ſome of the inhabitants of Berne, Zucher, Lucerne, Oberwald, and ſome traitors belonging to Underwald and Switz. The battle began at break of day, and was on both ſides equally bloody. Notwithſtanding the great ſuperiority in number of the enemy's forces, (which without exaggeration I may reckon at 18,000) it would not have been eaſy for them to ſubdue the courage of our brave men, had not treachery aſſiſted them, and delivered up ſome of our moſt important poſts into their hands.

The number of our army was, compared with the French, inconſiderable; it amounted to 2,000, beſides 300 Switzers, who joined us as volunteers, and fought in common with us. Theſe numbers, though ſmall, were determined to conquer or to die. Their Religion, their Freedom, the Happineſs of their country, their wives and children, were all at

ſtake; objects, the reſolute defence of which theſe children of the Alps conſider not merely as a political or moral obligation, but as a religious duty, eſſential, not only to their temporal, but even to their eternal happineſs. TREACHERY, and the faithleſſneſs of ſome of our unworthy countrymen, who have caſt a ſtigma on the honour of a nation hitherto ſo renowned for courage and fidelity, are the cauſes of the irrecoverable loſs which we have ſuſtained. Our enemies are indebted to the ſame TREACHERY for ALL the advantages which they have acquired in the preſent war, and which they ſeek to attribute to the fame of their arms,

The perfidious Directory of Araw, co-operated in the execution of theſe atrocious projects, and the money extorted by rapine and fraud from the other Cantons, afforded the means of corrupting ſome of the loweſt and moſt profligate of the inhabitants of Underwald. It was theſe villains who ſold their country. Under the pretence of the warmeſt

affection to the common cauſe, they aſſociated with their countrymen in arms. In the battle they turned their backs upon us, and even attempted to imbrue their hands in the blood of their brothers. We reſiſted long, but at laſt TREACHERY aided by ſuperiority of number prevailed; the blood of the Swiſs flowed in ſtreams over our once ſmiling country.

Never did a troop fight with more determined valour, than my brave brethren did on that day. No one of them wiſhed to outlive the deſtruction of his country; they all courted death, deſirous only before they fell, to mark their fall by that of an enemy. Even our wives appeared to envy the honour which their huſbands acquired, and took up arms with us, to ſhare our glory; preferring death rather than ſubmiſſion to the mercy of ſuch an enemy. More than a hundred of them were put to the ſword, and died like heroines. Every one knows the cruelty of the French Republicans, and how many defenceleſs creatures have on every occaſion been ſacrificed in cold blood, as

victims of their uncontroled barbarity; their conduct is but too familiar to all Europe, their plunder of all property, their violation of every thing that is esteemed most sacred, their confiscations, their sacrilege, and their massacres; but never was their inhuman rage more strongly exemplified than on this day, so fatal to my gallant countrymen. Our Priests, our Nuns, our Old Men, our Wives and Children, were indiscriminately butchered even at the altar.—Churches, houses, the property of the unoffending and defenceless inhabitants, the little fortunes which the unremitted labours of a century had accumulated, were all given as a prey to the flames. Stanztaadt, Bucks, Beckened, and every house as far as Ennemos, are burnt to ashes.—The ground is every where strewed with bodies, and covered with blood, and the smoke still ascending from the ruins of our once peaceable and happy dwellings, spreads itself over the whole atmosphere, and adds to the horror of the scene.

SUCH ARE THE GLORIES OF FRANCE! Such the triumphs of Jacobins and Atheiſts! Let us, in the midſt of all our misfortunes preſerve an unſhaken courage: Let us cheriſh with unabated ardour our affection for our unhappy country, and above all things let us cultivate in our hearts the ſentiments of that Religion which affords the beſt reward of virtue, and the ſureſt conſolation in affliction. Well knowing that the day will come when every one of the parricides who have ſurrendered up their country a prey to theſe mercileſs tyrants, ſhall anſwer for their crime at the terrible JUDGMENT SEAT OF GOD.

To the Directory at Araw, to our faithleſs and degenerate countrymen, but ſtill more, to the bloody tyranny of the French, we owe all our miſeries. Their baſe and unmanly revenge thirſts for blood when conqueſt has been atchieved, their avarice is never ſated, their ambition aſpires to Univerſal Dominion, their injuſtice has overwhelmed a people, who for cen-

turies lived happy, in the exercise of virtue, and in the enjoyment of freedom.

Let them not triumph in the advantages they have acquired! The hope of just retribution, the love of Freedom, the hatred of France, are deeply rooted in the heart of every Swiss.—From generation to generation they shall be transmitted till the descendants of William Tell have found the moment to shake off the yoke of tyranny, and punish the oppressors of mankind.

FINIS.